

Papers on Peace | One of a series
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Study of Democratic Institutions

"...THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE"

Norman Cousins, Robert McAfee Brown,
Hermann J. Muller, Everett E. Gendler, and
Thomas Merton, on "Pacem in Terris,"
the encyclical of Pope John XXIII



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**"...therefore choose life,
that thou mayest live, thou
and thy seed." (Deut. 30:19)**

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(continued)

goodness of life and of the world. The friar came, sang the "Song of Brother Sun," to which St. Francis had added two lines about peace. The mayor listened in tears. The bishop confessed his own haughtiness. And there was peace between them.

This is a charming story. No doubt we will need more than charming stories to bring peace to the world of our time. But the meaning is there: where there is a deep, simple, all-embracing love of man, of the created world of living and inanimate things, then there will be respect for life, for freedom, for truth, for justice, and there will be humble love of God. But where there is no love of man, no love of life, then make all the laws you want, all the edicts and treaties, issue all the anathemas, set up all the safeguards and inspections, fill the air with spying satellites, and hang cameras on the moon. As long as you see your fellow-man as a being essentially to be feared, mistrusted, hated, and destroyed, there cannot be peace on earth. And who knows if fear alone will suffice to prevent a war of total destruction? Pope John was not of those who believe that fear is enough.

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NORMAN COUSINS (page 5)

has been editor of the *Saturday Review* since 1940. Long active as a worker for world peace, he is honorary president of United World Federalists and the author of such books as *Modern Man Is Obsolete*, *Who Speaks for Man?*, and *In God We Trust: The Religious Beliefs of the Founding Fathers*.

ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN (page 13)

is professor of religion at Stanford University. He was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in 1944 and previously taught at Macalester College and the Union Theological Seminary.

HERMANN J. MULLER (page 27)

biologist, currently associated with the City of Hope in California, has taught at Indiana University, Amherst, University of Edinburgh, Institute of Genetics in Moscow, and the University of Texas. He received the Nobel Prize for physiology and medicine in 1946 and has made many distinguished contributions in the field of genetics.

EVERETT E. GENDLER (page 39)

Rabbi of The Jewish Center in Princeton, New Jersey, was ordained from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1957. He has served congregations in Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil, among others. A participant in the August 1962 Prayer Vigil in Albany, Georgia, he is chairman of the Rabbinical Assembly Action Committee for Racial Justice.

THOMAS MERTON (page 51)

entered the Trappist monastery of Gethsemani in 1941, was ordained a priest in 1949, and is now master of novices of the Abbey of Gethsemani. He is the author of many books, including *Seven Storey Mountain*, *Seeds of Contemplation*, *No Man Is an Island*, and *Behavior of Titans*, and the editor of *Break Through to Peace*.

It is the attitude of openness prescribed by "Pacem in Terris" that must form our thinking as Christians in time of crisis, and not the closed and fanatical myths of nationalistic or racial paranoia. Only if we remain open, detached, humble in the presence of objective truth and of our fellow-man will we be able to choose peace.

Anyone familiar with the writings of St. Francis and with his life is aware that the Saint was always urging his Friars to be at peace with each other and to go among men as peacemakers. A remarkable chapter on missions among the Saracens (First Rule of St. Francis, C. 16) anticipates the ecumenical ideas of our own time, even though it was written in the age of crusades:

There are two ways in which the friars who go out [to the Saracens] can act with spiritual effect. The first is not to dispute or be contentious, but for love of the Lord to bow to every human authority and to acknowledge themselves Christians. The other way, whenever they think it to be God's will, is to proclaim the Word of God and then faith in God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit....

All friars everywhere are to remember that they have given and surrendered themselves soul and body to our Lord Jesus Christ and for love of Him they must expose themselves to all enemies both visible and invisible, for our Lord says: "The man who loses his life for my sake shall save it in life everlasting."

And we know that St. Francis, toward the end of his life, made peace between the Mayor and Bishop at Assisi by sending one of the friars to sing his wonderful hymn in praise of God in His creatures in their presence. He thought (as did Pope John) that the best way to turn their minds to peace was to remind them of the

the repetition of these formulas makes them sound more and more hollow and absurd to everyone. This climate of disillusionment and disgust is dangerous because it implies a growing contempt for reason and for the basic human powers without which man cannot organize his life in a free and orderly fashion. This engenders a deeper pessimism, a more tenacious hopelessness, as communication becomes more and more precarious.

"PACEM IN TERRIS" certainly recognized that Catholics themselves were to a great extent out of contact with the rest of the world, enclosed in their own spiritual and religious ghetto. One of the chief contributions of Pope John's brief pontificate was that he opened the ghetto and told Catholics to go out and talk to other people, to Protestants, to Jews, to Hindus, and even to Communists. He realized that without this climate of openness the communication which was essential for the preparation of a climate of mutual trust would be out of the question. He insisted on making a clear distinction between "false philosophical teachings . . . and historical movements that have economic, social, cultural or political ends." (paragraph 159) It is necessary to communicate with those who hold different ideologies when we are confronting common problems that can only be solved in collaboration. If we speak different languages we must nevertheless attempt to find the essential points of agreement without which there is, as Cardinal Suenens says, a permanent risk of disaster. We must therefore either decide to continue in a fatal rivalry or begin to trust one another in progressive negotiations in which peace may eventually be stabilized and guaranteed.

"... THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE"

by *Norman Cousins*

The political parties men serve, the flags they salute, the fraternities they maintain, the holy books they revere or abjure—all these have suddenly become of intermediate significance alongside the positions men take on the question of war or peace in a nuclear age. For there are only two groupings of ultimate consequence on earth. One grouping consists of those who give thought to the implications of nuclear war and are willing to look and build beyond national sovereignty in order to avert it. The other grouping regards nuclear force primarily as a form of advanced military weaponry at the call of the national sovereign state. All other groupings or parties, whatever their formal designations—Socialists, Communists, Democrats, Republicans, Christian Democrats, etc.—have only limited relevance in the human situation today and, for all their promise or fury, are rapidly becoming vestigial.

The first grouping knows that the business of peace has become the most important business in the world. Within that grouping is an almost limitless diversity of backgrounds and affiliations. But they constitute a world peace party. The ties that bind them are literally the strongest ties in the world, for they are concerned with human destiny.

Of all the implications of nuclear force, therefore, none is more compelling and critical to religious leaders than the fact that nuclear war would only superficially be a war between nations. Essentially, it would be a war against God. For it is the work of God and not of man alone that is now in jeopardy. The precariously balanced conditions that make life on this planet possible—not solely human life but life in general—these conditions can now be smashed or altered. Man's works of art, his cities, his cathedrals, and his homes are palpable, personal, replaceable. But his genes and his basic nature belong to a higher design and are not his to expunge or assail.

The rights of the state are many. They include the right to sacrifice human life or to take human life in the defense of the nation. But there is nothing in the political rights of the state or its rulers that includes the right to strike at the very nature of man, or to disfigure the face of man, or to toy with the vital balances that make life possible. For if the state has political rights, man has natural rights. These natural rights should be beyond the reach and the authority of the state. The good society should exist to serve and protect these rights. Man has a right to keep himself from being cheapened, debased or deformed. He has a right to creative growth. He has a right to individual sanctity and sovereignty. He has a right to make life purposeful. If these natural rights should die, though human flesh in some form remain, then the survivors will not be the lucky ones.

Once this is understood it no longer seems inexplicable or politically naive that the head of the Catholic Church, for almost half a century a world rallying point of anti-communism, should have addressed himself directly to the political head of the Soviet Union in the

Not only is communication lacking: it is blocked. It is fiercely resisted by groups and nations which close themselves in upon themselves and refuse to communicate with one another except by ultimatums and threats of destruction. Not only that, but esoteric thought systems and complex vocabularies erect barriers that only a specialist can penetrate. Thus the failure of communication between the great powers leads to resentment, distrust, and disillusionment among the others.

A pervasive climate of boredom, exasperation, and indifference tends to prevail where the grosser moods of bellicism and fanaticism are seen for what they are. A reviewer in *Commentary*, summarizing the argument of a book on this subject, gives us in a readable paragraph the picture of liberal and neo-conservative discontent in Europe and the "emerging nations":

The cold war from being a necessary defensive operation against the armed threat emanating from the USSR in 1948 has turned into an endless struggle for global hegemony: a struggle that neither side can (and perhaps no longer wants to) win. Meanwhile the neutrals are getting restive: Asia, Africa and Latin America want to break out of this straitjacket. Industrialization—whether capitalist or socialist—has become *the* pre-occupation of elites who speak for two-thirds of mankind: the hungry two-thirds. Yet all the while Washington and Moscow exchange verbal brickbats amidst growing boredom and indifference, and latterly to the accompaniment of cat-calls from Peking.... ("The Cold War in Perspective," by George Lichtheim, *Commentary*, June 1964, p. 25)

So, while the policies of force continue to invoke traditional notions of justice, rights, international law, etc.,

uation they regarded as "hopeless." The lover of justice, Plato wrote, seeing himself as though thrown into a "den of beasts" and unable to change the jungle law,

will remain quietly at his own work like a traveller caught in a storm who retreats behind a wall to shelter from the driving gusts of dust and hail. Seeing the rest of the world filled full of iniquity, he will be content to keep his own life on earth untainted by wickedness and impious actions, so that he may leave this world with a fair hope of the next, at peace with himself and God. (*Republic*, 496)

It is perhaps true that sometimes individuals may be forced into this position but to view it as normal and to accept it as preferable to the risks and conflicts of public life is an admission of defeat, an abdication of responsibility. This secession into individualistic concern with one's own salvation alone may in fact leave the way all the more open for unscrupulous men and groups to gain and wield unjust power.

The example of Taoism in China in the chaotic period of the third to the first centuries B.C. is there to show how an other-worldly spiritualism in public life can end in the worst kind of arbitrary tyranny. The intellectual and the spiritual man cannot therefore justify themselves in abandoning society to the rule of an irrational will to power.

If sheer arbitrary will and brute force are not to take command of everything, reason must seek more solid and more harmonious solutions by arbitration and discussion. Men must collaborate sincerely in solving their difficulties. This is a basic Christian obligation.

But rational collaboration is manifestly impossible without mutual trust, and this in turn is out of the question where there is no basis for sure communication.

cause of peace. Indeed, Pope John XXIII did more than that: he held out his hand. He did so in good faith and trust and with the expectation that the gesture would be reciprocated. In so doing, he demonstrated the power that lies within the humanness of humanity.

The policy of the outstretched hand was not just a manifestation of Christian spirit, or a supreme confidence in the power of goodness to awaken goodness, or a summons to the in-dwelling God in the name of a common humanity. The outstretched hand was the product of a supreme awareness of a new dimension in world affairs that affected human destiny. It was also an act of responsibility at a time when man's differences were becoming the combustibles of a nuclear war.

IT MAY BE ASKED whether

Pope John's Christian message was comprehensible to Nikita Khrushchev. I had the privilege in April 1963 of bringing from the Vatican to the Kremlin an advance copy of "Pacem in Terris," officially translated into Russian in Rome. Chairman Khrushchev listened very carefully as I called attention to some of the key points in the encyclical. At several points in the text, especially in those sections dealing with the specific responsibilities of statesmen in a nuclear age, Mr. Khrushchev nodded in agreement.

The Chairman responded by saying he was profoundly impressed by Pope John's dedication to peace. He knew that Pope John was critically ill and that not much time was remaining to him; the fact that he should devote his remaining strength to an attempt to save humanity could not help but inspire even those who had regarded themselves as polar opposites from Catholicism.

Several months earlier, when I went from Rome to Moscow to seek the release of Archbishop Slipji, imprisoned for seventeen years in the Ukraine, the matter came up of the Pope's moral intervention during the week of the Cuban missile crisis. Mr. Khrushchev said at that time that the Pope's appeal for restraint had had considerable weight in his thinking. In fact, he said, it was the first ray of light in the fast-developing darkness. Though Mr. Khrushchev did not say so directly, I have reason to believe that his affirmative response to the request for the release of Archbishop Slipji, and a similar request some months later for the release of Archbishop Beran, of Czechoslovakia, were specifically due to the impact on Khrushchev of Pope John's profound personal appeal. (It was significant, perhaps, that Mr. Khrushchev should have remarked to me at our first meeting that both he and Pope John had much in common: both came of humble peasant stock; both grew up with an awareness of human suffering; both had a hearty sense of humor.)

The main point here, of course, is that Pope John had succeeded where the so-called political realists had failed. He was able to crack through the supposedly impenetrable shell of political determinism. Since the most important cause on earth to Pope John was to make this planet safe and fit for sacred man, he did not allow himself to believe that any doors were closed to him in the pursuit of this purpose. Nor did he admit that apparent obstructive evil, even when personified, could not be pierced.

When I reported to Pope John on the mission to Moscow, I found him most pleased by Khrushchev's response to his call upon world leaders for responsibility and restraint and for an end to nuclear terror. The Pope said he had deliberately avoided polemics against

War destroys the comfortable routine of life, trains us in violence and shapes our character according to the new conditions. . . . The cause of all these evils was imperialism, whose fundamental motives are ambition and greed, and from which arises the fanaticism of class conflict. The politicians on each side were armed with high sounding slogans. . . . Both boasted that they were servants of the community and both made the community the prize of war. The only purpose of their policy was the extermination of their opponents, and to achieve this they stopped at nothing. Even worse were the reprisals which they perpetrated in total disregard of morality or of the common good. The only standard which they recognized was party caprice and so they were prepared, either by the perversion of justice or by revolutionary action, to satisfy the passing passions begotten by the struggle. . . . Society was divided into warring camps suspicious of one another. Where no contract or obligation was binding, nothing could heal the conflict, and since security was only to be found in the assumption that nothing was secure, everyone took steps to preserve himself and no one could afford to trust his neighbor. On the whole the baser types survived best. Aware of their own deficiencies and their opponents' abilities, they resorted boldly to violence, before they were defeated in debate, and struck down, by conspiracy, minds more versatile than their own.

(Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, iii, 82)

In such a situation, Plato, who hoped that a return to reason could be brought about by the participation of the philosopher in public life, also recognized that intelligent men would be tempted to withdraw from a sit-

nomic satellites. Yet, says Cardinal Suenens, these four are "the rules of the road which lead to peace, rules which must be respected in the relations between various political communities."

Perhaps the chief reason why these rules are neglected is that the most basic principles of human social life are not respected. "Pacem in Terris" reminds us that mankind is one family in which all nations, groups, and individuals must cooperate, on the basis of truth, justice, love, and liberty, in attaining the universal common good which is also at the same time the good of the individual person in his individuality, in his dignity, and in his basic rights. If man does not seek, by reasonable collaboration, to attain these ends, there is no alternative but the arbitrary exercise of the will to power, in which case the law of reason, of nature, and of God is usurped by the law of the jungle. A theologian commenting on "Pacem in Terris" says:

If, owing to antiphilosophic prejudice, universal truths dictated by reason are rejected and only the manifestations of the changing will or nations are revered, whatever these may be, it would be absurd to attempt the construction of a juridical organization of the human race.

(P. Riga, *Peace on Earth*, p. 33)

The climate of irrationality, confusion, and violence which is characteristic of such times as ours is after all nothing new. The circumstances are different, but in the end we can find in our world much that is analogous to the classic description of Athens after the Peloponnesian War.

Thucydides masterfully outlines the political situation of a rich society that is in a crisis of decline and change:

the Soviet Union in recent years because of his belief that meaningful and useful communication would at some time be critically essential. Besides, he added, it was much too late for denunciations; there was time only to try to prevent an unspeakable holocaust. Moreover, he was not forgetting what he himself had seen of the Russian people during his earlier service as an Apostolic Delegate. He did not believe that their essential religiosity had been destroyed. They were a warm and wonderful people and he knew they could be reached.

Then he asked me if I could speak Russian. I replied not. Then he asked me if I was studying the Russian language. Again I said not. A shame, he replied; it was important for Westerners to know the language. In fact, he said, he was now taking lessons in Russian himself. He commented that few things were more important than knowing how to talk to the Russians. Nothing could be lost by trying; everything could be lost if men did not find some way to work together to save the peace. He said he was not afraid to talk to anyone on earth about peace. If Mr. Khrushchev was sitting right then in the chair that I occupied, he said he did not think he would feel uneasy or awkward in talking to him.

I told Pope John of Khrushchev's remark that he thought he and Pope John had much in common. Pope John smiled broadly and said he was glad that Khrushchev felt that way.

When I told Pope John of the considerable effect of his appeal for peace on the Russian leader during the week of the Cuban crisis, the Pope said he was grateful that this was so and that it was a good sign. He had no way of knowing during Cuba week whether his appeal would make any difference; even so, he said it was im-

portant to try. He could not take the responsibility for withholding any moral power he might possess. And when his appeal was given prominent attention inside the Soviet Union, he felt this faith had been justified.

AS HE discussed these matters, Pope John's manner was animated and enthusiastic. Even so, his voice betrayed his fatigue and general sense of depletion.

He indicated his awareness that there was not much time left to him; but he was determined to use himself fully as long as he could in the service of world peace. The Holy See might be useful in reducing tensions between East and West. Therefore, it was logical to open up contacts. The Holy See was not attempting to arrogate to itself an unwelcome or unnatural role. But the grimly significant feature of the present world crisis was precisely that there were so many elements of danger and so few elements of control. Any person or agency in a position, near or far, to help strengthen the controls had a positive obligation to do so.

Did he know that his efforts were likely to be criticized or misconstrued? Certainly, but this was no warrant for lack of initiative or irresponsible inaction. The worst that could be said was that the Pope was taking Christianity literally. He couldn't imagine Jesus concurring in the notion that human security and freedom depended on the manufacture and amassing of hydrogen bombs, which, if used, could put a torch to the human nest. The fact that two or more nations, in the act of warring against one another, would in actuality also be at war with the human race—if this fact had no profound moral and spiritual significance, then what fact did?

sider the context of war and peace, since in a time of crisis and mass-emotionalism the dissenter who maintains his insistence on the rights of peace is easily regarded as a traitor. Nevertheless, such dissent may acquire a decisive importance, and it should always be protected by law against arbitrary attack and suppression (paragraph 27). Rights also imply obligations, and the "right to investigate the truth freely [is correlative] with the duty of seeking it and of possessing it ever more completely and profoundly." (paragraph 29) It is unfortunate that the advantages of freedom in a democratic society have been so little appreciated and that men have abdicated their right and neglected their opportunity in order to remain passive, confused, and hopeless, not using the sources of information and dissenting opinions to which they might have access.

Cardinal Suenens, speaking to the United Nations on May 13, 1963 and explaining the encyclical, compared it to a symphony with the leitmotif: "Peace among all peoples requires: 'Truth as its foundation, justice as its rule, love as its driving force, liberty as its atmosphere.'"

But in the moral climate of mass opinion, engineered by publicists, "truth" tends to mean a sensational revelation of some new iniquity on the part of the enemy. And the misfortune is that on both sides there is enough real iniquity around to make the fabrication of sensational news items quite easy. Justice, in this climate, operates on a double standard: one for one's own side and another for the enemy, so that what in him is criminal is, in us, simple "realism." Love is assuredly not the driving force of peace policies which are inert and firmly rooted in inveterate distrust. Liberty is not exactly the mark of relationships in which big powers reduce smaller ones to the status of political or eco-

the idea of a crusade against nations that can quite easily be caricatured as essentially wicked and perverse: made up of beings hardly human, never deserving of trust, always worthy of being destroyed.

THIS WAS what prompted Pope John to speak out against the abuse of the mass media, both in "Mater et Magistra" and "Pacem in Terris." A falsely informed public with a distorted view of political reality and an oversimplified, negative attitude toward other races and peoples cannot be expected to react in any other way than with irrational and violent responses. Therefore the Pope condemned the dissemination of prejudice and hate by the mass media and said: "Truth . . . demands that the various media of social communication . . . be used with serene objectivity . . . methods of information which fall short of the truth, and by the same token impair the reputation of this people or that, must be discarded." (paragraph 90)

An important element in "Pacem in Terris" is Pope John's repeated insistence that one of the basic rights of free man is "the right to be informed truthfully about public events" (paragraph 12), along with the right both to basic and higher education (paragraph 13), the right to form associations to defend their just aims (paragraphs 23, 24), and to take an active (not passive) part in public affairs (paragraph 26). One who merely echoes the opinions in the newspaper is not taking an "active" part in the life of his nation. Hence Pope John's paragraphs on human rights imply not only the privilege but also at times the obligation of dissent from a prevailing and passively accepted viewpoint. And this is extremely important when we con-

This question, along with all the other central questions related to peace and the human future, formed the basis of the historic encyclical, "Peace on Earth," in April. A few weeks later, the progressive nature of the Pope's illness became critical. Even so, he followed events carefully. He looked for evidence that the nations were making progress in organizing their relationships and halting the arms race. He was heartened by the worldwide response to his plea for peace. His hopes were never higher than at the end. Some men may recognize that a claim has thus been laid on them in terms of their own efforts and obligations. The sustaining prospect is that there may be enough of them.

WE LIVE IN an age which looks to physical motion for its spectacular achievements. A man encased in a metallic capsule spinning through outer space; the heart of an atom pried open and releasing vast stores of energy; streams of electrons flashing images of something happening thousands of miles away—these are the main articles of wonder in the modern world. But they do not have the impress on history of an eighty-one-year-old man dying of cancer, using the Papacy to make not just his own Church but all churches fully relevant and fully alive in the cause of human unity and peace. Human advocacy harnessed to powerful ideas continues to be the prime power. The peace sought by Pope John need not be unattainable once belief in ideas is put ahead of belief in moving parts.

The gap between scientific knowledge and political institutions has been clearly seen and clearly felt. But scientific "progress" has created an even greater challenge to spiritual man than it has to political man. If

science has suddenly brought all peoples within a single small enclosure, with the option to make it into a single battlefield or a single neighborhood, then it has also brought about a vast test for the world's great religions. Can religion act in behalf of the human species itself at a time when the species is unrepresented and in danger? How important is man? These are the questions that starkly confront every church and all churchmen.

What is at stake today is not primarily Christian civilization or Islamic civilization or Jewish civilization or Hindu civilization or any other but the civilization and life of man. It is not man's particularized beliefs but his own uniqueness that counts. For what threatens him is the loss of the basic conditions that make life meaningful and purposeful. To the extent that any religion speaks only in behalf of its own interests, to the extent that it places itself above or apart from the whole, it jeopardizes its own interests and injures the whole.

The spirit of ecumenicalism, which reaches its highest point in "Pacem in Terris," finds its fulfillment not just in Christian unity but in the effort to safeguard and ennoble human destiny.

self has to resort to deception whenever possible, so as not to be deceived. He is convinced that the enemy will attack him violently as soon as he thinks he can get away with it. In this climate of thought, strategy tends to work around to the idea of "hitting the enemy before he hits me first."

The crude simplicity of this view tends to recommend it to the average man who does not have time to do a great deal of thinking and who, in any case, does not have access to the more selective and thoughtful sources of information which might enable him to form a more sophisticated judgment. It is clear, and its sweeping ruthlessness gives it an appearance of realism. But unfortunately it maintains a moral and political atmosphere of fear and hatred in which it is more difficult even for "experts" to view things with objective detachment.

And who is to say to what extent the statesmen themselves are influenced, in practice, by the horrendous mythology of the mass man? The leaders help to make a myth by their own pronouncements and slogans, and because the myth is so willingly believed by the common man they themselves assume that this is a kind of divine ratification. *Vox populi vox Dei*.

That there are large numbers of Christians who live somewhat easily in this climate of opinion is clear from the popular religious press. This is not surprising if we reflect that most Christians belong to the rank and file of common humanity and that the Catholic press has a tendency to follow accepted and prevalent opinions in matters of world politics. It is also possible that a certain negativism and pessimism which has been widespread in both Catholic and Protestant spirituality since the Renaissance and the Reformation may account for the willingness with which believers accept

POPE JOHN REFLECTS on this climate of confusion and practical despair. "How strongly does the turmoil of individual men and peoples contrast with the perfect order of the universe! It is as if the relationships which bind them together could be controlled only by force." (paragraph 4) And later he continues: "fickleness of opinion often produces this error: many think that the relationships between men and States can be governed by the same laws as the forces and irrational elements of the universe." (paragraph 6)

While praising and fully accepting science, Pope John protests against the common opinion which defies pseudo-science and leaves man's freedom subject to a vague determinism of laws and forces, thus failing to see that man's freedom and intelligence are the instruments by which he elevates himself above his material surroundings and controls his own destiny by living according to truth, justice, and love.

Pope John's message of freedom calls man, first of all, to liberate himself from the climate of confusion and desperation in which he finds himself because he passively accepts and follows a mindless determinism.

Though there are significant differences in ideology in the different power blocs, nevertheless the stratification of opinion is more or less the same everywhere. The extremists on both sides are mirror images of each other.

The thought that is obsessed with war puts aside other considerations and concentrates on the fact that one is threatened with attack, indeed with destruction. This type of thinker is convinced that only the strongest measures are of any use. He distrusts negotiation because he is sure that the adversary is an arch deceiver, and because he is so sure of this he thinks that he him-

by Robert McAfee Brown

The fact that a papal encyclical, usually addressed solely to Roman Catholics, should provide the basis for extended discussion by non-Catholics as well as Catholics, is a good symbol of the extended area of dialogue opened up by the author of the encyclical, Pope John XXIII. And a Protestant's first reaction must be one of gratitude that the encyclical is addressed to him as well as to "the Venerable Brothers the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops and Other Local Ordinaries..." Pope John rightly saw that "peace on earth" is not a peculiarly Catholic topic, and so—for the first time in Roman Catholic history—he addressed a papal letter not only to his own flock but also to "... All Men of Good Will."

The "Men of Good Will" who are not Roman Catholics naturally do not give the document the kind of authority that must be accorded it by those directly

1. Not only can this do something for non-Catholics, but for Catholics as well, for there has been the further consequence that, as Fr. Peter Riga notes, "Pope John put an end, at least in theory, to the Catholic ghetto mentality which has been persistent since the Reformation." (Cf. Riga, *Peace on Earth: A Commentary on Pope John's Encyclical*, Herder & Herder, New York, 1964, pp. 27-28)

under papal jurisdiction. The non-Catholic world, however, has given a high degree of acclaim to the encyclical, a fact that demonstrates Pope John's wisdom in reaching out to those beyond his own ecclesiastical flock, and seeking for ways in which all men may work together for the common good despite their differences of opinion in other areas:

"The doctrinal principles outlined in this document . . . provide Catholics, therefore, with a vast field in which they can meet and come to an understanding both with Christians separated from this Apostolic See, and also with human beings who are not enlightened by faith in Jesus Christ, but who are endowed with the light of reason and with a natural and operative honesty." (paragraph 157)

Catholics and non-Catholics are not yet united on the level of theology and worship, but "*Pacem in Terris*" suggests that they can give increasing expression of their solidarity on the level of common concern and action in the body politic. This type of approach also provides the platform from which the Pope can commend negotiations among groups who do not share many basic presuppositions, but who must nevertheless work out a *modus vivendi* if mankind is to survive.

In what follows, a number of points raised in "*Pacem in Terris*" will be discussed in the light of Protestant presuppositions and reactions.

ONE POINT at which "*Pacem in Terris*" offers a helpful basis for attacking common problems is in its unequivocal affirmation of *the right of religious liberty for all men*. This is a point of interest not simply to religious communities, but one that has the broadest possible implications for understanding

draw from any kind of dissenting commitment that would leave them exposed to ostracism. They submit and conform, and trust to the protective coloring that conformity provides in a mass society.

The current moral climate is one of more or less resigned compliance with the world-view popularized by the mass media.

Apart from a very small minority who demand uncompromising unilateral initiatives toward peace, the necessity of force and military strength seems unquestionable to the majority. But there are of course considerable differences of attitude, and many gradations in the opinions of statesmen, strategists, and dictators of opinion. Indeed, reflection on strategy in the nuclear age has at times assumed the appearance of an esoteric cult to which only the expert with access to a computer can really consider himself initiated. There is unquestionably a sincere desire for peace, or at least an earnest desire to avoid total war, in the minds of most policy-makers. But the legacy of recent history and the frustrating ambiguities of the international situation seem to make really effective steps toward peace impossible. In the minds of the world leaders a continued stalemate is accepted, in practice, as "peace," and the power struggle continues under the constant menace of accidental global war.

Therefore, though there are many good minds earnestly concerned with the technical problem of peace, and many plans have been proposed and even initiated, the details of this peace-thinking do not reach and illuminate the mind of the common man. For him there remains only the confused apprehension of a perilous situation in which force or the threat of force is a practical necessity, war a proximate danger, and peace at best a fond hope.

in fact that there has been a significant relaxation of tensions, at least between the United States and Soviet Russia.

Without flattering ourselves that we are on the way to a quick solution of our problems, or even that the world at large has fully committed itself to implementing Pope John's encyclical of peace, we can at least recognize that such things are possible. We are not utterly condemned to think our way into an impasse from which the only issue is destructive violence. Human and reasonable solutions are still open to us. But they depend on our climate of thought, that is to say, on our ability to hope in peaceful solutions.

A weather map is necessarily very superficial. The storm areas in thought and opinion are not all concentrated on one side or the other of the iron curtain. On both sides extremists, characterized by negativism, distrust of the other side, suspicion, fear, hate, and the willingness to resort to force are very outspoken and have access to the mass media so that their opinions often take on the appearance of quasi-dogmatic finality and are uncritically accepted, with a few unspoken reservations, perhaps, by the majority of the population. Not that most men want war, or even willingly face the possibility that certain trends might lead suddenly to war, but they assume, in a guarded and more or less resigned silence, that the most menacing voices are probably right and that what is printed in most of the papers and shouted from most of the house-tops quite probably represents a more or less coherent interpretation of political reality. They know that total war is always possible, yet they blindly and confusedly hope that what they refuse to think about is so "unthinkable" that it will never occur, and so they busy themselves with the absorbing rush of life and unconsciously with-

between nations as well. For the affirmation of religious liberty is a touchstone to any valid concept of liberty *per se*. To the degree that religious liberty is lacking in a state, other liberties are endangered. Conversely, a guarantee of religious liberty for all men implies the final sanctity of conscience and thereby guarantees the right of dissent, one of the most precious indications of political health.

To be sure, the terms in which the right of dissent trespasses from the realm of liberty into the realm of license are not sketched out in the encyclical, and this remains a problem where ongoing conversation must continue, since neither the recent statement on religious liberty proposed to the Vatican Council nor the various statements adopted by the World Council of Churches have fully solved this complex problem. But the solution can come only out of the prior affirmation that religious liberty is a right accorded to all and not only to some.²

Pope John's assertions—the clearest yet made in authoritative Catholic documents—come at two points in the encyclical: "Every human being has the right to honor God according to the dictates of an upright conscience, and therefore the right to worship God privately and publicly." (paragraph 14)³ And in the final

2. The fact that both the second and third sessions of the Vatican Council failed to take even a preliminary vote on the religious liberty question makes it doubly important that the issue be kept at the forefront of public discussion. A similar retreat at the next session of the Council could only leave the impression that no matter how great a majority of the Council fathers desire such a statement, the Church as a whole is unwilling to endorse it.

3. Cf. the slightly different translation in *The Pope Speaks*, which sheds further light on the fundamental issue at stake: "Also among man's rights is that of being able to worship God in accordance with the right dictates of his own conscience, and to profess his religion both in private and in public."

section of pastoral exhortation, as though correcting a possible wrong conclusion to be drawn from this quotation (that only those whose consciences are not in error have this right of free expression), Pope John says, "Moreover, one must never confuse error and the person who errs. . . . The person who errs is always and above all a human being, and he retains in every case his dignity as a human person; and he must be always regarded and treated in accordance with that lofty dignity." (paragraph 158)

That these distinctions are of utmost importance in the relation between ecclesiastical bodies is beyond dispute. And it is here being emphasized that they likewise set forth the fundamental basis on which relationships between men and nations, in other than the ecclesiastical sphere, must also be ordered. That the right of dissent in the name of conscience not only must be guaranteed but can be defended without lapsing into religious or political indifference is a most important ingredient for the contemporary world scene.

A SECOND STRESS in the encyclical that must be underlined in the contemporary situation is the emphasis—on the face of it almost a truism—that *rights entail duties*.⁴ The reason why such an emphasis is not merely a truism is that we see developing on the political scene today, particularly in America, a whole ideology that in the name of some such catch-word as "freedom" proclaims freedom for the individual in terms so extreme that the freedom of

4. Cf. Part I of the encyclical, which first sets out the rights to which men are entitled (paragraphs 11-27) and then discusses the duties that follow from those rights (paragraphs 28-38). The theme recurs, in another connection, in paragraphs 80-85.

that moral and sociological epidemics—of panic, hatred, destruction—take their origin. There are certain "climates" of opinion which make it practically impossible to solve civil or international problems except by resort to violence. When such a climate exists, certainly the fact ought to be recognized and something ought to be done about it. And that explains Pope John's encyclical, "Pacem in Terris."

IN A DOCUMENT devoted to the question of war and peace in the nuclear age, relatively little is said about war itself. The greater part of the encyclical concentrates on basic principles: the dignity of the human person and the primacy of the universal common good over the particular good of the political unit. Above all, Pope John realized that his main job was one of "clearing the air" morally, psychologically, and spiritually. To a world lost in a pea-soup fog of exhausting and intricate technicalities about law, economics, politics, weaponry, technology, etc., the Pope did not offer a series of casuistic solutions to complex and detailed questions. He recalled the minds of men to the fundamental ideas on which peace among nations and races must always depend. In other words, he tried to recreate for them the climate of thought in which they could see their objectives in a human and even a hopeful light, and invited them at least for a moment to emerge from the obscurity and smog of arguments that are without issue. The world was grateful for this moment of fresh air, and in political life, especially on the international level, the smallest gestures and advances toward peace should be accepted with gratitude. Many such gestures have followed the publication of "Pacem in Terris," on Holy Thursday of 1963, so many

be simply an arbitrary exercise of choice. Blind affirmation of will is irrational and tends to destroy freedom. In any case, however, whether rational or not, freedom depends necessarily on man's concept of himself and of the situation in which he finds himself. If he is able to grasp clearly and realistically the truth of his plight, even though that plight may be desperate or confused, he can make good use of his freedom and transcend even the most tragic injustices and be more truly a man because of them. He can turn defeat into victory. On the other hand, the will that is obsessed with power can refuse to see and to assess vitally important realities. It can remain obdurate and closed in the presence of human facts that contradict its obsessions. It is often precisely the will to power that is most stubborn in refusing to accept evidence of goodness and of hope. The blind drive to self-assertion rejects indications that love might be more meaningful and more powerful than force.

One of our most important tasks today is to clear the atmosphere so that men can understand their plight without hatred, without fury, without desperation, and with the minimum of good will. A humble and objective seriousness is necessary for the long task of restoring mutual confidence and preparing the way for the necessary work of collaboration in building world peace. This restoration of a climate of relative sanity is perhaps more important than specific decisions regarding the morality of a particular strategy or pragmatic policy.

And so this essay is concerned with the climate of opinion and thought in the years of crisis in which we live. Public opinion is intimately concerned with the decisions of authority, decisions which may affect the life and death of millions of people. It is therefore in the general climate of thought (or of thoughtlessness)

other individuals is in danger of being trampled under foot.

The freedom, for example, to dispose of one's property only to such persons as the owner "in his absolute discretion chooses" (the wording of a recent amendment to the California State Constitution) safeguards a "right" for property owners in such fashion that the right to acquire property, particularly by minority groups, is seriously jeopardized. There is no recognition in this kind of thinking that the right to own property entails certain duties to the community at large, and that one is not entitled to claim rights for himself that work harm on the common good of the entire society, let alone the human dignity of certain members of that society.

In ensuing decades this kind of concern will be increasingly expressed not only in the relatively limited area of individual property rights but in the much wider area of the rights of one nation against another. Here the plea for "freedom" becomes increasingly emotional and even strident, and there is need for sober reexamination on the basic interconnection between rights and duties. In some areas of the world, to be sure, greater stress will be needed on the rights of individuals against the state; but in other areas the need will be to emphasize the duties of the individual to the state, or the duties of individual states to the community of states.

A THIRD KEY AREA, and one that serves as a kind of case study of the problems of "peace on earth," focuses on *the problems of minority groups and the struggle for racial justice*. While the problem presses in with particular vigor in the United

States of America, it is present also, in varying degrees, in almost every modern nation.

It has been a source of some disappointment that neither "Pacem in Terris" nor its equally important predecessor, "Mater et Magistra," gives extended attention to this problem, save for the brief enunciation in "Pacem in Terris" of broad principles for dealing with minorities (paragraphs 94-97).⁵ Nevertheless, most of the principles in "Pacem in Terris" that deal with the individual can be transposed into terms that give direction for resolving contemporary problems of racial tension, and the careful delineation of such principles as they apply to racial justice would be a worthy extension of the teaching impact of the document, and one that American Catholic sociologists might make a special province of concern.

Curiously, one of the few direct references to race in the encyclical has been the subject of considerable misunderstanding, and it is important to clarify the point. In the translation published by the Paulist Press we read (after a statement that in the past unequal positions in society were justified on account of race or class): "On the contrary, the conviction that all men are equal by reason of their natural dignity has been generally accepted. Hence racial discrimination can in no way be justified, at least doctrinally or in theory." (paragraph 44) The possible implication from this statement that there might be *other* terms on which discrimination could be justified is clearly neutralized by the translation of the same passage in *The Pope*

5. The lack of emphasis so exposed illustrates one of the built-in limitations of documents emanating from a predominantly nationalistic ethos; the internationalized ethos of the proposed "senate of bishops" should help to offset this limitation in future expressions of the teaching authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

tendencies towards fascist or totalitarian aberrations. The struggle against war is directed not only against the bellicosity of the Communist powers, but against our own violence, fanaticism, and greed. Of course, this kind of thinking will not be popular in the tensions of the cold war. No one is encouraged to be too clear-sighted, because conscience can make cowards by diluting the strong conviction that our side is fully right and the other side is fully wrong. Yet the Christian responsibility is not to one side or to the other in the power struggle: it is to God and truth, and to the whole of mankind.

This is not a political study. But the moral options of our times are necessarily involved in various interpretations of political reality. The different views of the situation prevailing in the West react upon each other, and all together they combine to create extreme difficulties and complexities. The question arises, then, whether man is really capable of choosing peace rather than nuclear war, or whether the choices are ineluctably made for him by the interplay of social forces. The answer to this question must depend on many factors beyond the control of any individual or any one group. But the fact remains that we cannot face the moral issue as free and rational beings unless we can still assume that our freedom and rationality have a meaning. If we are not able to choose to survive, then all discussion of the present crisis is pointless. If we are still free, then this essay can be considered as a very imperfect contribution to the work of moral renewal which is absolutely necessary if we are to make significant use of our freedom.

Freedom does not operate in a void. It is guided, or should be guided, by the light of intelligence. It should conform to a rational estimate of reality. It should not

realize ourselves to be often, if not always, facing the questions that were asked of Cain and Judas.

If we are disciples of Christ we are necessarily our brother's keepers. And the question that is being asked of us concerns all men. It concerns, at the present moment, the entire human race. We cannot ignore this question. We cannot give an irresponsible and unchristian consent to the demonic use of power for the destruction of a whole nation, a whole continent, or possibly even the whole human race. Or can we? The question is now being asked.

This is the question that forms the subject of the present essay.

IN THIS MOST critical moment of history we have a two-fold task. It is a task in which the whole race is to some degree involved. But the greatest responsibility of all rests upon the citizens of the great power blocs which hold the fate of other nations in their hands.

On one hand we have to defend and foster the highest human values: the right of man to live freely and develop his life in a way worthy of his moral greatness. On the other hand we have to protect man against the criminal abuse of the enormous destructive power which he has acquired. To the American and Western European this twofold task seems reducible in practice to a struggle against totalitarian dictatorship and against war.

Our very first obligation is to interpret the situation accurately, and this means resisting the temptation to oversimplify and generalize. The struggle against totalitarianism is directed not only against an external enemy, communism, but also against our own hidden

Speaks: "Today, on the contrary, the conviction is widespread that all men are equal in natural dignity; and so, on the doctrinal and theoretical level, at least, no form of approval is being given to racial discrimination." Paragraph 44, in other words, in addition to enunciating the principle that racial discrimination is morally wrong, goes on to make the descriptive statement that past attempts to justify it on doctrinal and theoretical grounds are no longer being attempted.⁶

Perhaps the best way to discern the cutting edge the encyclical could have in the arena of race relations would be to proceed from the statement quoted above, that "all men are equal by reason of their natural dignity," to note all the "rights" that Pope John declares inhere in all men and to determine the degree to which in a given country or locale these rights are in fact being assured to minority groups. An equally illuminating—and devastating—procedure would be to list in similar fashion the "duties" men have toward one another and then to determine to what degree majorities in given countries and locales are exercising those duties toward disadvantaged and dispossessed minorities.

THUS FAR we have noted three broad areas in the encyclical that can command wide assent and that are crucial touchstones in the ongoing struggle for world peace: unequivocal support for religious liberty, the relation of rights and duties, and the concern for minority groups. We must now turn

6. Although this statement, as a descriptive statement, is undoubtedly too sweeping, it is interesting to observe that not even the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, which in the past has given strong support to the doctrine of *apartheid*, now maintains that segregation can be justified on Biblical grounds. Whatever reasons are still advanced in that denomination are sociological rather than theological.

to more specific areas directly relating to the relations between nations, areas which therefore, almost by definition, become more controversial.

1) Perhaps the most crucial of these is the question of *the use of force*. Do the facts of the atomic era make it possible any longer to speak of "the responsible use of force"? Pope John would seem to reply in the negative. Public authority, he declares, "must be set up by common accord and not imposed by force." (paragraph 138) The presence of atomic weapons only underlines the futility of force in international relations: "... it is hardly possible to imagine that in the atomic era war could be used as an instrument of justice." (paragraph 127)⁷ And the encyclical goes on to express dismay that, even in the face of this fact, the nations continue to arm. At the very beginning of the encyclical, after having contrasted the order of the universe with the disorder of men, Pope John states with evident dismay, "It is as if the relationships which bind them together could be controlled only by force." (paragraph 4)

The most detailed treatment of the problem, of course, is found in paragraphs 109-119, dealing with disarmament. Taking issue with the presence of atomic weapons as constituting a deterrent, Pope John states emphatically "that the arms race should cease; that the stockpiles which exist in various countries should be reduced equally and simultaneously by the parties concerned; that nuclear weapons should be banned; and that a general agreement should eventually be reached about progressive disarmament and an effective method of control." (paragraph 112) The only basis for true

7. Cf. the translation in *The Pope Speaks*: "In this age which boasts of its atomic power, it no longer makes sense to maintain that war is a fit instrument with which to repair the violation of justice."

We are being asked the very same question, if not directly and openly by Christ, at least by history of which we, as Christians, believe Him to be the Lord. I do not say that our love of Christ, desperate and confused as it is, is little more than a gesture of betrayal. But let us be sincere about facing the question, and hope, through God's grace, to answer it better than Judas.

Quite apart from what the Communists may or may not do, what are we, the dwindling and confused Christian minority in the West, going to do? Or at least, *what do we really want to do?* Do we intend to settle our problems peacefully or by force? Have we anything left to say about it at all? Have not the decisions been taken, to a great extent, out of our hands? Not yet. Among our leaders, some are Christians. Others cling to humanitarian principles which should be relevant here. These leaders will (we hope) take kindly to suggestions and to pleas that are based on Christian ethical norms. We have been very close to nuclear war, more than once, in the past five years. Has disaster been avoided merely by a healthy fear of the bomb, or have more humane and rational motives come to our aid?

The Christian is not only bound to avoid certain evils, but he is responsible for very great goods. This is often forgotten. The doctrine of the Incarnation leaves the Christian obligated at once to God and to man. If God has become man, then no Christian is ever allowed to be indifferent to man's fate. Whoever believes that Christ is the Word made flesh believes that every man must in some sense be regarded as Christ. For all are at least potentially members of the Mystical Christ. Who can say with absolute certainty of any other man that Christ does not live in him? Consequently in all our dealings with other men we must

was asked where Abel was—a question of primordial and typological importance. Cain's answer was not clear.

In discussing the fateful problems of violence, hatred, and power politics in terms of Christian responsibility, we must first discover what question is being asked of us, and by whom. If we are willing to face the question along with the questioner, we may eventually become able to give a true and clear answer.

The question is not merely "Where is our violent and bloated culture leading us?" or "Can total war be avoided?" or "Will the Communists take over the West?" or "Will the West win the cold war?" or "Will the survivors of a nuclear war envy the dead?" From the standpoint of the present essay, such questions are irrelevant. Not that the issues they raise may not be vitally important, but the surmises and conjectures which might be offered as answers to such questions are really not answers to anything. They are beguiling guesses which seek to allay anxiety and which may well threaten to misdirect our best efforts if not to justify actions of which we ought to be ashamed.

The more important question is not "What is going to happen to us?" but "What are we going to do?" or, more cogently, "*What are our real intentions?*" This last question is probably seldom asked with sufficient seriousness. Let us suppose it is not simply something we ask ourselves. Let us hear it as a question that is proposed to us by the Lord and Judge of life and death. Let us bear in mind another such question: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" (Matthew 26:50) Judas, somewhat subtler and far unhappier than Cain, having learned some fundamental truths, happened to know that the acceptable answer to such crucial questions had something to do with love. So he kissed Christ. But his kiss was a sign of betrayal.

peace "consists not in equality of arms but in mutual trust alone." (paragraph 113)

There can be no quarrel, of course, with the desirability of these aims. The questions to be raised center on the means for achieving them. There is a long gap, to cite only one point, between the desire for disarmament and the effecting of disarmament. And one of the crucial problems is the problem of determining the criteria to be employed by the various nations during that long interval as they seek to order their relations with one another. The encyclical, in jumping rapidly to the desirability of disarmament, is less than clear in helping to discover such criteria; in its justifiable fear about the ravages of atomic destruction it underplays the need to discern means and limits and ways in which power is to be exercised responsibly in the present. Although we may agree that "any human society that is established on relations of force must be regarded as inhuman" (paragraph 34), we are faced with the fact that through our lifetimes at least we will live in a world where the use of force, and the threat of the use of force, do not evaporate simply because they are called "inhuman." The delineation of guidelines at this difficult point, of the responsible use of force precisely while we are attempting to find ways of outlawing force, is a major task for those who seek to relate the encyclical as specifically as possible to present problems.⁸

2) A second and related point stems from the fact that the encyclical's teachings are based on a *doctrine of natural law*. This has been, of course, the basic premise of all recent Catholic social teaching, as it will un-

8. On the whole issue of the use of power, and for a further critique of "Pacem in Terris" at this point, cf. Paul Ramsey, "Pacem in Terris," *Religion in Life*, Winter 1963-64.

doubtedly continue to be. It has the advantage that conclusions based on it do not depend upon revelation but upon reason, and that the base of appeal can be correspondingly broader. But two questions may be raised about its final efficacy in appealing beyond the realm of "the Clergy and Faithful" to "All Men of Good Will."

First, the conclusions that Catholic theology draws from the premises of natural law are not always conclusions that seem equally self-evident to non-Catholics, and natural law theory is thus sometimes divisive as well as inclusive. The hopeful fact in this otherwise unpromising situation is that (sometimes as a result of contact with non-Catholic thought) Catholic moral theology is occasionally willing to take a fresh look at its conclusions. The present ferment in the area of teaching about birth control, for example, is a case in point. A similar example of creative growth in the understanding of implications of natural law is present in the encyclical itself, where, in addition to treating the usual criterion of "the common good," Pope John introduces the criterion of "the dignity of the human person" (cf. paragraphs 55-59), and one must hope for further studies of the implications of this emphasis.⁹

The other premise upon which natural law theory itself is based, namely that there are not only rationally deducible principles but also minds clearly equipped to draw the deductions, is likewise open to certain questions. Does the encyclical, for example, give sufficient attention to the stubborn recalcitrance of the human mind and its ability to see the facts in ways advantageous to itself and disadvantageous to others? There

9. Cf., as an initial example, Gregory Baum, "Pacem in Terris and Unity," in *The Ecumenist*, Vol. I, No. 5, June-July 1963, pp. 73-75.

"... THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE"

by Thomas Merton

"We feel it Our duty to beseech men, especially those who have the responsibility of public affairs, to spare no labor in order to ensure that world events follow a reasonable and humane course... Nevertheless, unfortunately, the law of fear still reigns among peoples... There is reason to hope, however, that by meeting and negotiating, men may come to discover... that one of the most profound requirements of their common nature is this: that between them and their respective peoples it is not fear which should reign but love, a love that tends to express itself in... collaboration."

"Pacem in Terris" (paragraphs 117, 128, 129), John XXIII

A man is said to be "responsible" in so far as he is able to give a rational and humanly satisfactory answer, or "response," concerning his acts and the motives behind them. Cain, for instance, after the murder of Abel,

is a highly optimistic note running throughout the encyclical which, valuable as it is for purposes of exhortation, has the danger of leading to premature disillusionment on the part of those who try to put into effect what the encyclical urges, and then discover that other minds are not necessarily swayed by the arguments of reason. When Pope John urges that "the true and solid peace of nations consists not in equality of arms but in mutual trust alone," and then immediately adds, "We believe that this can be brought to pass" (paragraph 113), one can only hope fervently that he is right. But the fact that this is "an objective demanded by reason," as the next paragraph states, offers no guarantee that men will act in as rational a manner as one might wish they would.

The transition from "equality of arms" to "mutual trust alone" is going to be a long and tortuous transition, and it must be recognized that men will act during this period from a great mixture of motives. Reason may be one of them, but self-interest, national interest, mutual suspicion, hostility, and fear will be equally significant components that must not be overlooked because they are unpleasant. The recognition of the "sinfulness of sin" is something that Catholic theology recognizes elsewhere, and any discussion of "peace on earth" must take greater account of this than the encyclical specifically does. It is this lack that prompts Reinhold Niebuhr to write in his otherwise laudatory assessment of "Pacem in Terris," "The difficulty with this impressive document is that the Church . . . speaks as if it were a simple matter to construct and reconstruct communities, not by organic processes of history but by an application of 'the sense of justice and mutual love.'"¹⁰

10. Cf. *Christianity and Crisis*, May 13, 1963, p. 83.

1. Isaiah 45:18. 2. Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7. 3. Mechilta of Rabbi Ishmael, Tractate "Shirata," Chapter 4. 4. Sanhedrin 74a. 5. Sanhedrin 74a. Cf. Maimonides Code, Laws of Homicide, Chapter I, Law 13. It is hardly necessary to add that the Rabbinic reluctance to execute, resulting in a very early *de facto* abolition of capital punishment, applied to this case as well. 6. Maimonides Code, "Treatise on Kings and Wars," Chapter VII, Law 7. 7. Deuteronomy 20:19-20. 8. Sanhedrin 58b. 9. Cf. in this respect that thoughtful and learned "Rejoinder" of Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits in *Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Jewish Thought*, Volume 4, No. 2, Spring 1962, pp. 196-205. Cf. also the incisive comments of Rabbi Steven S. Schwarzschild in his brief essay, "Theologians and the Bomb," pp. 22-25 in *The Moral Dilemma of Nuclear Weapons* (Essays from *Worldview*, 1961), William Clancy, editor. 10. Martin Buber: *Ten Rungs*. 11. Abot III:18. 12. Baba Kama 38a. 13. Zohar I, 576. 14. Berachot 10a. The basis of Beruria's opinion is the possibility of reading Psalm 104:35 in two different ways. 15. Abot de Rabbi Nathan XII. 16. Mishnah Shevi-it 4:3. 17. Abot de Rabbi Nathan XII. 18. Baba Metzia 59a. 19. Numbers Rabbah II. 20. Baba Kama 38a. According to the Rabbinic tradition, the seven universal or Noachian commandments, six enjoined upon Adam and one added after the Flood, are the following: (1) not to worship idols (2) not to blaspheme the name of God (3) to establish courts of justice (4) not to shed blood (5) not to commit incest (6) not to rob (7) not to cut flesh or limb from a living animal. 21. High Holy Day Liturgy. 22. Numbers 11:29. 23. Isaiah 30:15. Cf. also the important volume edited by Mulford Q. Sibley: *The Quiet Battle, Writings on the Theory and Practice of Non-Violent Resistance*, New York, 1963. 24. Genesis Rabbah 42. 25. Isaiah 11:1-9. 26. Deuteronomy 30:19.

3) Perhaps the most complex contemporary issue to which the encyclical points has to do with *the ongoing problems of co-existence*, and (to select only one example of those problems) the difficulty that is raised when one nation is engaged in actions internally that seem a threat to the good of all. (The right of other nations to “interfere” in the case of external actions of a given nation is considerably clearer.) If one affirms the right of freedom of conscience, for example, as a right to be enjoyed by all men, what should or can be done when a given nation is denying that right to its own citizens? That the citizens have a right to rebel is clear from the Pope’s reiterated insistence that evil laws need not be obeyed: “. . . if any government does not acknowledge the rights of man or violates them, it not only fails in its duty, but its orders *completely* lack juridical force.” (paragraph 61, *italics added*) Again, “authority to govern is a necessary requirement of the moral order in civil society. It may not be used against that order; and the very instant such an attempt were made, it would cease to bind.” (paragraph 83) Even more explicit is the statement, “. . . if civil authorities legislate for or allow anything that is contrary to that [moral] order and therefore contrary to the will of God, neither the laws made nor the authorizations granted can be binding on the consciences of the citizens, since we *must obey God rather than men*.” (paragraph 51)

Such statements are a clear expression of the extent to which the rights of individual conscience against unjust laws must be protected, and they build the right of dissent into the very fabric of a true understanding of government. But how, and in what ways, is the defense of this principle to be extended beyond the internal life of a state and made a responsibility incumbent upon the community of states? What measures would

dare there not be at this stage of human history? Read dispassionately and from a distance, the emphases of “*Pacem in Terris*” on co-existence, disarmament, trust, and world fraternity also sound somewhat Messianic. They are. And precisely there, in that muted Messianism, lie the power, the strength, the realism, and the relevance of that stirring encyclical.

If you see the great powers contending with one another, anticipate the footsteps of the Messiah.²⁴

Here too the once fanciful has become hard fact, and the world will long admire and cherish the late Pope John XXIII for enunciating it that all the world might hear.

Not, of course, that one expects that full personal perfection from which peace would automatically result; nor that one anticipates that full knowledge of the Lord which would banish all hurt from among us.²⁵ But to expect and insist that our unprecedented situation today be recognized and responded to in unprecedented and daring ways—that is both our privilege and our mandate!

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed.”²⁶

Remembering that we are sons of The King, members of the Fellowship of the Beloved, should not, of course, blind us to another fact all too evident: we simultaneously find ourselves members of that equally universal human society, the Fellowship of the Imperfect.

In Thy sight no man is wholly righteous . . .
We have all sinned.²¹

Hence honest criticism is very much in order, toward ourselves as well as toward others. The great freedom, nay, the great demand to criticize the sacred power centers and politics of one's own nation, felt so keenly by the Prophets of Israel, should now be felt by every man.

Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!²²

The sobering awareness of our common imperfection also makes clear the fact that struggle will continue to be a necessary part of human existence. But by the same token we must make certain that the instruments of the struggle are appropriate to our imperfect state. Modern weapons of mass destruction are plainly not. And so, freed as never before from the constraints of traditional military strategy, we must now investigate thoroughly the power of non-violence as a means both for the defense and for the attainment of human values. The accomplishments of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. suggest that Isaiah's dictum is not so much sentimentalism as it is "realpolitik" of the spirit:

For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel:
In turning and stillness shall you be saved,
In tranquillity and trust shall be your strength . . .²³

There is, let us grant, a tone of muted Messianism in these brief remarks. But why should there not be? How

the United Nations be justified in taking against South Africa's racial policy, beyond token condemnation, or against the United States' racial policy, for that matter? By what criteria would it be determined that such policies went against the moral order (the definition of which would likewise have to be subject to criteria not easily agreed upon by the community of nations)? Can such concerns receive any expression in the light of the declaration "that no country may *unjustly* oppress others or *unduly* meddle in their affairs"? (paragraph 120, italics added) How much emphasis is to be given to the italicized words in the preceding quotation, and who determines when offenses against persons within a given nation would make "meddling" in their affairs no longer "undue"?

The transition, in other words, from concern for the internal affairs of autonomous nations to the concern of one nation for the internal life of another is a crucial transition that will require the most delicate balance of understanding, sensitivity, and moral concern.

THESE COMMENTS suggest only a few areas in which those examining the encyclical need to push beyond its explicit statements to determine what specific applications may lie implicit within it.

The twin resources for such examination are wisdom and commitment. The encyclical wisely points out that neither is sufficient without the other. A man cannot play an active part in world affairs "unless he is scientifically competent, technically capable and skilled in the practice of his own profession." (paragraph 148) But these things, "although necessary, are not of themselves sufficient to elevate the relationships of society

to an order that is genuinely human" (paragraph 149), since "it is also necessary that they should carry on those activities as acts within the moral order." (paragraph 150)

To the technicians, in other words, the Pope is saying that technical skill is not enough, and to the theologians and men of good will he is saying that piety is not enough. Thus, not only in dealing with the problems Pope John discusses in his encyclical, but in attempting to deal with the encyclical itself, we are reminded by him that what is needed is "a synthesis between scientific, technical and professional elements on the one hand, and spiritual values on the other." (paragraph 150)

We are blessed with unprecedented resources which can be devoted to this aspect of peacemaking; the traditional pittance for poverty will no longer do.

Rabbi Simeon used to say: "Note how different from the ways of God are the ways of men. When a human king goes to war he goes with multitudes and legions, but when he goes on a peaceful mission he goes alone. Not so the Holy One, blessed be He. When He goes on a mission of peace, He goes forth with multitudes and legions."¹⁰

It would be tragic indeed if we failed to make full use of our exceptional freedom to "imitate God" by allocating a generous share of our world's resources for the alleviation of world-wide poverty.

BY REMEMBERING that all

men are sons of The King, we should also find some terrors diminished. There are certain representations of "the enemy"—spectres of unmitigated, monolithic evil—which are more caricatures than portrayals of reality. Yet these distortions of perspective haunt us severely.

"He stood, measured the earth, and beheld . . ."

What did He behold? He beheld that the seven

[basic moral] commandments were accepted by
all the descendants of Noah . . .²⁰

Though these natural intuitions of morality have often enough been disobeyed by all peoples (the "good" also, not only the "wicked"), the fact remains that in all men is planted that from which decency may spring forth. To see this is to see in some small measure as He sees; to see this is to see that from within the worst of tyranny goodness may arise—if there but be life.

When Aaron would walk along the road and meet an evil or wicked man, he would greet him ...¹⁵
For the sake of peace, one greets idolators and inquires after their welfare.¹⁶

Direct communication must not cease among men, however greatly they may differ in outlook.

And knowing that all of us are members of that Fellowship of the Beloved, we should neither scorn nor despair of that mediation which, appealing to the not-yet-actual but in-principle-possible, brings about the actuality of that generously sought.

When two men had quarreled with each other, Aaron would go and sit down with one of them and say to him: "My son, mark what thy fellow is saying! He beats his breast and tears his clothing, saying 'Woe unto me! how shall I lift my eyes and look upon my fellow! I am ashamed before him, for it is I who treated him foully.' " He would sit with him until he had removed all rancor from his heart, and then Aaron would go and sit with the other one and say to him: "My son, mark what thy fellow is saying! He beats his breast and tears his clothing, saying, 'Woe unto me! how shall I lift my eyes and look upon my fellow; I am ashamed before him, for it is I who treated him foully.' " He would sit with him until he had removed all rancor from his heart. And when the two men met each other, they would embrace and kiss each other.¹⁷

Neither should we forget our unusual freedom to contend with that source of strife so succinctly portrayed in the Talmudic proverb.

When the barley is gone from the pitcher, strife comes knocking at the door.¹⁸

"... THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE"

by Hermann J. Muller

The scientific revolution has so inordinately increased the powers of men that all human groups must rapidly find social measures which will allow them to live with one another in peace, unity, and voluntary cooperation. For otherwise they will continue to drift down collision courses that inevitably lead to mutual annihilation. Persons realistically confronting the world situation today will arrive at this conclusion no matter whether their background has been Communist, Buddhist, Shintoist, Hindu, Confucian, Mohammedan, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish, Humanist, or existentialist, and no matter what national or other group allegiances they may profess. Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical of 1963, "Peace on Earth," argues forcefully for this conclusion from the standpoint of a Roman Catholic. This message is of great importance both because of its direct influence in helping to swing the Catholic sixth of the world's population into line with the effort to achieve a workable co-existence, and also because, less directly, it will be conducive to the adoption of similar policies by others.

CURIOUSLY, the clue to the attitude by which non-Catholics may hope to come to that *rapprochement* with Catholics and others which is necessary for the attainment of co-existence is given in paragraphs (157-160) which Pope John addresses specifically to Catholics, in instructing them in how to treat with non-Catholics. As he states therein, Catholics "*should be prepared to join sincerely in doing whatever is naturally good or conducive to good...* Meetings and agreements . . . between believers and those who do not believe or believe insufficiently because they adhere to error, can be occasions for discovering truth and paying homage to it. . . ." Furthermore, "false philosophical teachings regarding the nature, origin and destiny of the universe and of man [cannot] be identified with historical movements that have economic, social, cultural or political ends, not even when these movements have originated from those teachings and have drawn and still draw inspiration therefrom. For . . . the movements, working on historical situations in constant evolution, cannot but be influenced by these latter and cannot avoid, therefore, being subject to changes, even of a profound nature. Besides, who can deny that those movements, in so far as they conform to the dictates of right reason and are interpreters of the lawful aspirations of the human person, contain elements that are positive and deserving of approval? . . . It can happen, then, that a drawing nearer together or a meeting for the attainment of some practical end, which was formerly deemed inopportune or unproductive, might now or in the future be considered opportune and useful."

Exactly these same principles are applicable, reciprocally, to non-Catholics in their dealings with Catholics, and with others of different groups from their own. The fact that even Khrushchev (whose policies in this

And by this remembering we shall come to claim with fuller awareness our membership in that universal human association, the Fellowship of the Beloved.

Rabbi Akiba used to say: "Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of God. Extraordinary is that love which made known to him that he was created in the image of God."¹¹

We belong, and likewise all other human beings, though they may differ from us and our particular outlook.

A gentile who occupies himself with the study of the moral law equals in status the High Priest.¹²

Nor is membership confined to the righteous alone.

Whenever destruction of the wicked takes place, there is grief for them above.¹³

It is no simple matter to take such a teaching to heart and live by it. It requires, for example, that we stop playing the outmoded game of "friend-foe" in which the object is to defeat or destroy the "foe." We shall have to enlist all our religious and educative forces in freeing us fully for a radically different game.

There were once some lawless men in the neighborhood of Rabbi Meir who caused him a great deal of trouble. Rabbi Meir accordingly prayed that they should die. His wife Beruria said to him: "How can you think that such a prayer is permitted? . . . When sins will cease there will be no more wicked men! Rather pray for them that they turn from their ways, and there will be no more wicked." He did pray on their behalf and they did turn from evil.¹⁴

There are many ways in which we are already free to help men turn from evil.

TO HEAR this is frightening. For millennia we have—perhaps reluctantly, but with much religious sanction, reasonably clear consciences, and reasonable expectations of survival—put our trust in armed might, at least as the ultimate arbiter of human conflict. And suddenly, almost in spite of us, it is removed from the scene as a possible instrument of life both by conscience and by consequences. Had we deliberately, through trust and intent, abolished war simply by moral effort and human growth, how glorious a prospect the future should present. But it really was not we who managed, gradually but persistently, to put an end to war as an agency of human arbitration. In fact, war as a life option *has been abolished*; it remains now only as a death option. But its abolition in this sense has been accomplished more by technology than by our own intentions. And so we find ourselves naked and seemingly defenseless in a world fraught with terror and enmity.

We are terrified, true, and understandably so. But we are also liberated; never before have we been quite so free. Until now we have acted on insufficiently generous assumptions about human beings, and we have failed. We now find ourselves free to try far more generous assumptions about both others and ourselves. In a sense, everything is now permitted: everything, that is, which flows from generosity and largeness of spirit; everything, that is, which flows from the love and appreciation of man and his Divine possibilities.

Rabbi Shelomo asked: "What is the worst thing the Evil Inclination can achieve?" And he answered: "To make man forget that he is the son of a King."¹⁰

For centuries circumstances have permitted us to forget; they now require that we remember.

field are allegedly to be maintained by those who have overthrown him) gave his approval to Pope John's appeal for a *modus vivendi* of this kind is a signal example of the possibility of its acceptance by realists of the most divergent opinions. It is to be anticipated that even the leaders of China, when their experience with nuclear weapons brings them to a better perspective on modern realities, will within a decade or two admit the soundness of this approach. Yet the present situation is too fraught with danger for us or anyone to sit idly by, waiting for time to work the necessary changes of heart and of policy. We must bestir ourselves in actively promoting in our own as well as in other groups the will to work toward a sound peace, a peace that is founded on mutual tolerance.

IT SHOULD NOT

be overlooked that Pope John, in the paragraphs quoted above, also took occasion to warn Catholics not to "*compromise in matters wherein the integrity of religion or morals would suffer harm*." And he reserved to the Church "the right and the duty . . . to intervene authoritatively with Her children in the temporal sphere, when there is a question of judging about the application of those principles [of ethics and religion] to concrete cases." It is to be expected that non-Catholics, similarly, will seldom compromise their underlying principles, when coming to agreements with Catholics and other groups on matters of policy and procedure. Nevertheless, they, like Catholics, can usually find ideological pathways whereby their principles are brought (for them at least) into consistency with their practical programs for peaceful relations. Not all of these other groups, however, and certainly not the Humanists,

would approve of invoking any ideological or religious "authority" in support of their position.

Although in all groups sheer physical survival, and also survival of the values they represent, would prescribe a course of peace in today's world, most of the groups would also find among their principles more specific grounds for fostering, in the present situation, friendly relations between all peoples. For all major cultures that have united diverse tribes have emphasized that good will and good works should be extended by everyone to the members of the community in general. And now that advances in science, along with technological achievements in communication, transportation, and industry, are drawing all peoples closer together into an increasingly interconnected *de facto* world-wide community of knowledge, of production, and of exchange of goods and ideas, the pressure of feeling is everywhere strong to extend to all men the fellowship earlier reserved for others of the same nationality. At the same time, the advantages of this course become ever stronger and more evident to those who draw rational conclusions.

Humanists and many others not bound by traditional dogmas will not agree with Pope John when he attributes the existence of fellow feeling and rationality in man to the operation of supernatural causes. They will, however, agree that the germs of both fellow feeling and rationality are deeply rooted in human nature. These faculties are in the first place rooted genetically, as a result of biological evolution, because the structure and the mode of life of proto-humans and humans were unique in causing both fellow feeling and rationality to be especially conducive to survival. In the second place the cultural evolution of man laid further stress on these faculties. This happened because both their objective

When siege is laid to a city for the purpose of capture, it may not be surrounded on all four sides but only on three in order to give an opportunity for escape to those who would flee to save their lives . . .⁶

When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you under siege? Only trees which you know do not yield food may be destroyed . . .⁷

Can one imagine such a tradition sanctioning modern nuclear warfare or even modern "conventional" warfare?

I cannot. Nor can I imagine it sanctioning the "mere" act of preparing for such modes of conflict. Genuine preparation, after all, is predicated upon the possibility of use in extreme circumstances, "credibility" being essential to a policy of deterrence. But if, as seems clear to me, the use is quite outside the bounds of permissibility in any circumstances whatsoever, the preparation itself is also illicit.

Resh Lakish said: He who lifts his hand against his neighbor, even if he did not strike him, is called a wicked man.⁸

Pope John found it "hardly possible to imagine that in the atomic era war could be used as an instrument of justice." Many of us in other traditions, basing ourselves on authoritative teachings of our own traditions, subscribe wholeheartedly to the finding that modern war together with its preparation no longer lies within the boundaries of religious permissibility.⁹

clear Rabbinic limitation set upon violations of the religious code in accomplishing this.

In every other law of the Torah, if a man is commanded, "Transgress and suffer not death," he may transgress and not suffer death, excepting idolatry, incest, and shedding blood. . . . Murder may not be practiced to save one's life. . . . Even as one who came before Raba and said to him, "The governor of my town has ordered me, 'Go, and kill so and so; if not, I will slay thee.' " Raba answered him, "Let him rather slay you than that you should commit murder; who knows that your blood is redder? Perhaps his blood is redder."⁴

It is also well known that Judaism recognized the right of a person to defend himself against an attacker, to the point of killing him if necessary. Not so often noted, however, is the strict limitation of means imposed even upon this plain act of self-defense.

It has been taught by Rabbi Jonathan b. Saul: If one was pursuing his fellow to slay him, and the pursued could have saved himself by maiming a limb of the pursuer, but instead killed his pursuer, the pursued should be executed on that account.⁵

The same limitation, incidentally, applies also to a bystander who, witnessing such a murderous pursuit, is enjoined to intervene on behalf of the pursued. He too, if he needlessly slay rather than maim the assailant, is regarded as deserving execution because of that excess.

This same insistence upon limitation characterizes authoritative Biblical and Rabbinic rulings concerning the waging of war. Massive destruction of population and resources may have been thinkable, but it was clearly unacceptable to traditional Judaism.

and their subjective value in aiding human life caused the groups that exercised them in greater measure to win out. At the same time, their value also became more explicitly recognized by the more perceptive of men, and so became enshrined in precept, legend, and exercise.

In this sense, it is in agreement with the conclusions of biology and anthropology to say, along with Pope John, that morality and rationality in man are in accord with "natural law." Only in recent times, however, has it been practicable for men to extend their fellowship to all humanity, although such an extension was long ago proclaimed as an ideal. Today this extension is in fact an urgent necessity. To be sure, it would constitute a departure from the natural law of the past. It represents a present-day consequence of human progress in which the larger implications of the individual steps previously taken in that progress had only been dimly realized. It is as natural as anything else, but it is a principle unique in modern man, growing out of the qualities natural to him only. If it is presently to come to fruition, it must be by means of man's fully conscious exercise of these same distinctive attributes of his, which are morality and rationality. Thus, in the case of man, the artificial is the natural, being the product of his heart, brain, and hand, working in concert.

Certainly it is not necessary or feasible for the different groups of men to reach agreement on the mode of origin or the primary causes of man's humanity before establishing workable accords based on man's actual humanity. As the anthropologist Gerald Berreman has recently pointed out (in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Nov., 1964), people—and peoples—can cooperate on a practical basis, even if they have different views and values, provided that they communicate with

one another effectively enough to realize that both or all sides are sincere in the desire to engage in mutually serviceable behavior. And as they proceed in this course they are likely to communicate ever more effectively and so to understand one another's position ever better. For beings who are rational enough, this means that they will gradually go further and further in resolving their ideological disagreements also. For after all there is only one truth, and this may be approached from various angles.

IN ORDER THAT, in the meantime, the different facets of truth (often complementary to one another), that are now cherished by different peoples, or different subgroups, may not be lost, and in order, further, that serious re-thinking may be promoted, it is essential that individuals and associations of them be allowed the maximum freedom of thought, expression, and action consistent with peace and civil order. Let discussions go forward searchingly and openly, and let ideas and practices be proven by their fruits. For no man, no creed, no nation, no social, political, or intellectual organization, has a monopoly on truth or right.

Most thinking persons, of whatever background, will be able to agree with Pope John that individuals and societies everywhere should aim to promote the ascendancy among men of "truth, justice, charity [or 'love'] and liberty." But political groups will differ greatly in regard to the forms these abstractions should take, and the means by which they should be striven for. I would prefer to put the same matter by saying that for all men there should be a maximum of *cognizant voluntarism* and *social orientation* in their ordering of

Think upon this, and do not corrupt and desolate
My world:
for if you corrupt it, there is no one to set it
right after you.²

Of course, how simple and obvious! The earth is meant to be inhabited, cared for, and enjoyed by us! Can anyone, in tranquil moments of the spirit, not know this? Yet the lulling din of daily pursuits somehow drowns out the echo of this plain proclamation of planetary purpose, and it is only at moments of keen hearing that we re-awaken to the appalling fact that the military means by which we now seek to attain certain ends jeopardize the very existence of human life on this planet so precious to us.

It is true, of course, that violence was resorted to and war waged throughout human history, often with religious sanction. But neglected in such a statement is the fact that Classical Judaism, for its part, simultaneously with its sanction bounded the permissible range of destructiveness. In both individual and collective instances Judaism was quite specific in limiting the application of violence for human ends, for it was well aware, even in those technologically primitive times, of the frightening uncontrollability of weapons and the tragic tendency of violence to become indiscriminate and unbounded.

However mighty the man, once the arrow leaves his hand he cannot make it come back ...
However mighty the man, once frenzy and power take hold, even his father, even his mother, and even his nearest of kin he strikes as he moves in his wrath.³

It is well known and often asserted, for example, that Judaism recognized the preservation of one's own life as a primary duty. Less well known, however, is the

readily assumed, are no longer to be taken for granted or assumed: this is the singular religious and ethical fact of our age. It was to this condition that the much loved and much lamented Pope John XXIII spoke in his encyclical, "Pacem in Terris," and it is to this condition that every one of us also must now speak. The assertion of simple things is today a radical task which every tradition must again attempt, and it is one modest effort in its barest beginning that I would offer in appreciation and tribute to Pope John's stirring execution of his task. By such an approach I trust that some of the broad areas of agreement with emphases of the papal encyclical will become evident.

WHERE SHALL we begin?

Clearly with our sense of cosmic purpose, for it is only within that larger scheme that our own limited place can be ascertained and appreciated. Two brief statements, one Biblical and one Rabbinic, help me, for one, to gain some idea of where we are and what it is all about:

... the Lord Who created the heavens

(He is God!),

Who formed the earth and made it

(He established it),

He did not create it a chaos,

He formed it to be inhabited!¹

In the hour when the Holy One, blessed be He, created the first man,

He took him and let him pass before all the trees of the garden of Eden, and said to him:

See **My** works, how fine and excellent they are!

Now all that **I** have created, for you have **I** created.

¹Footnotes for this paper appear on page 50.

their personal lives, of their work, and of their leisure, and in their participation in the affairs of the community. To be practicable of attainment this ideal implies, of course, a high level of education on the part of the common man, the development in him of a deep sense of brotherliness for others, and, basic to both of these, his economic and social well-being.

The great political rifts in the world today are between peoples who are told, and for the most part believe, that they alone have the solutions to the problems of how these ideal-seeming relations among men are to be attained. So long as this is the case each group, considering its own position to be sacrosanct, must maintain its inner independence in regard to its own affairs. For conquest of one major power by another is out of the question since all sides would lose disastrously, and surrender would appear to each to entail the loss of the most profound values that mankind has achieved. Since, however, the "balance of terror," with the arms race that supports it, is so unstable that it would be likely before long to break down into war, even if inadvertently, the great question is, how shall it be superseded? How can the contending powers be brought to accept, in its place, a balanced reduction of arms, finally leading to their complete elimination, without advantages being opened to one side that would be regarded by its opponents as too dangerous?

POPE JOHN fully recognizes this problem. He has been criticized for not giving specific answers to it. However, at the present stage these would be premature. We may agree, for the time being, on these more general points that he has emphasized: the need for serious and courteous communication be-

tween the opposing groups, the need for sincere negotiations based on their realization that accords are in their common interest, and the need for an increase in cooperative efforts that could be undertaken by them in diverse areas. Certainly also the United Nations should be strengthened.

In addition to these paths toward reconciliation between the present major contenders it should be remembered that there is another equally important task if durable peace is to be achieved. That is the rendering, without condescension, of truly massive and effective technological and economic assistance to the less developed and less committed peoples. At the same time, it is imperative that their rights be safeguarded, preferably under agreed-upon auspices, to choose their own economic and ideological courses, in the light of knowledge and in the presence of opportunities that are as wide-ranging, as honest, as relevant to their own needs, and as free of deception as possible. As in human life in general, we must trust the truth to make men free.

Departing from generalities, however, one specific feature of such aid that is an absolute essential, but that was not mentioned by Pope John, must be insisted upon. That is the imparting of information regarding the need for birth control, and regarding appropriate means of accomplishing it. This information should be accompanied by whatever technical and material assistance may be necessary in this connection. Otherwise population increase could undermine all other progress and destroy all foundations of peace. It would be insufficient, and it would often be inadvisable, to attack this difficulty by following the policy hinted at by Pope John (in his paragraph 101) of evening up population concentrations and economic inequalities by transfers of people and goods.

"... THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE"

by Everett E. Gendler

As recently as ten years ago I can recall conversations among Seminary students who found themselves wondering if traditional religion had anything really to say to the modern scene. Was there, finally, anything in the Biblical and Rabbinic tradition which, applied today, was something more than a truism, a generality, a statement of the obvious? In those youthfully naive days, when nuclear delivery time was still measured in bomber-hours rather than ballistic-minutes, we had not yet realized how very penetrating and radical statements of the obvious and proclamations of truisms would soon come to be.

How should we have imagined then, not so many years ago, that a simple call to trust one another would sound so revolutionary? That to declare the mass killing of hundreds of millions of human beings "no possible instrument of justice" would sound so radical? That to assert men's basic rights and dignity should prove so critical of present social organization on this earth?

Yet all these things have come to pass, and it is now painfully clear to us: the once obvious is no longer obvious. Values once taken for granted, limitations once

gradually wither. In a state of abundance, problems of distribution will become less acute. Where positive actions can achieve results, negative reactions and strife tend to lose their meaning. In the forward path of mankind there is room for multifold experimentation and variation, and men can freely share each others' diverse gains. Thus will the beast in man transcend himself, and the sublime burst forth in a mounting symphony of self-creation.

Modern techniques and modern knowledge do make the world, potentially, one unitary community. The way to achieve this unity in the face of the existing schisms is to promote both common action and common thought. By engaging in joint enterprises and acquiring joint interests, the opposing groups will find their areas of accord gradually increasing, relatively to their areas of opposition, and this evolution will occur in matters both of practice and of theory. Pope John has recognized this as the main path of convergence. As a devout Catholic, Pope John must of course have been convinced that in this way the principles of his Church would at last attain general recognition. No doubt the partisans of the Soviet system would hold a corresponding view, and be just as confident that by this means *they* would prevail. It is fortunate that the most militant sponsors of each contending group of doctrines can adopt this attitude. For in this way men can indeed approach closer not only to peace but to objective truth, and to policies and practices that will better serve the interests of all humanity.

IN HIS concluding section

Pope John makes a major point that, coming from so authoritative a Catholic source, is especially noteworthy. He observes that there are great areas for continued and complex revisions in social, economic, political, and cultural life, inasmuch as "these must all be adjusted to the era of the atom and of the conquest of space, an era which the human family has already entered, wherein it has commenced its new advance toward limitless horizons." (paragraph 156) Unfortunately, such matters are little referred to elsewhere in the encyclical. But they involve what is at the same

time the most critical and the most hopeful aspect of the situation. For, on the one hand, it is the increased knowledge and enhanced powers of human groups, issuing from the advances of science and technology, that have brought these groups to the present dire crisis in their relations. Yet, on the other hand, the still further advance of human understanding and of human practice, when conducted in behalf of mankind in general, could henceforth lead to the resolution of these conflicts, by providing the opportunity for effective common effort in the pursuit of ever nobler objectives.

Let us not accept science and technology grudgingly, and feel that we must make the best of a difficult situation. For they are in a way our sensory system and our motor organs, which have enabled us to behold the world as it is and to deal with it accordingly. Seeing, at long last, through the eyes of science, that the universe is incomparably greater than what we had dreamed, and learning of our own long ascent, we human beings can now more truly appreciate our own uniqueness and the awesome potentialities we hold. For science, setting men on this lofty peak of knowledge and granting them the wondrous capabilities of manipulating both the infinitesimal and the immense, has completely revolutionized men's prospects. By its means, in the technically advanced countries, the standard of living of the common man has already been enormously raised, and the richness of his life can still be greatly enhanced. Moreover, it is not only in these countries that poverty can now be eliminated and human dignity augmented. For, if science is rightly applied, this can be accomplished everywhere.

Science, however, is far more than a means to ease and enjoyment. It represents a spirit within which is held the aspirations of all humanity. Let us not be

afraid to carry this spirit forward into all realms of thought and action. Essential components of this spirit are adventurous and imaginative inquiry, balanced judgment, unrestricted but honest criticism and self-criticism, a willingness to build upon the work of others and to build with others, frank and lucid communication, maximally unbiased testing, searching observation, penetrating calculation, creative planning and execution, exhilaration in pushing forward both the material and the spiritual dominion of mankind. There must be an interweaving of this spirit with the spirit of sociality and with that of art, so that an integrated culture may emerge, or, as Pope John has put the matter (paragraph 150), "a synthesis between scientific, technical and professional elements on the one hand, and spiritual values on the other."

Above all, the spirit of science is the spirit of progress. As I have pointed out in an earlier article (in *The Humanist Frame*, edited by J. S. Huxley, Harper & Row, 1961), science seeks no static Utopia or Heaven. It can afford men ever newer horizons and higher peaks to climb, materially, mentally, and spiritually. It can afford ever greater and more inspiring opportunities for cooperative as well as individual achievement. Its pathway leads not only outwards into space and to other worlds than ours, but also inwards into the recesses of life, of the mind, and of the heart. By its means we will ourselves assume the role of creators of ever lovelier worlds and of more sublime beings. By its means, too, we can reach increasing agreement regarding the nature of things, since the conclusions of science rest on objective tests.

As the earth's peoples increasingly join hands in these open-ended enterprises, their ancient hates and fears, as well as their more recent estrangements, must